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# Press Release

*February 15, 2006*

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **ATTORNEY GENERAL MCGRAW AWARDS \$200,000 IN FUNDING TO WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY RESEARCH CORP FROM THE PHARMA, INC. SETTLEMENT FUNDS**

Attorney General Darrell McGraw today announced the distribution of \$200,000 to the West Virginia University Research Corp for the implementation of its drug diversion and awareness program in McDowell County, West Virginia. This money comes from the latest installment in the \$10,000,000 settlement with Purdue Pharma, Inc. over the addictive qualities of the drug Oxycontin.

This funding presented to West Virginia University today by West Virginia Attorney General Darrell McGraw will establish a community-based program in McDowell County to help West Virginia children avoid the dangers of prescription drug abuse. This will be a community based effort involving all members of the community who effect the lives of young West Virginians. Parents, students, teachers and the community at large will be involved in the effort to educate children on the dangers of substance abuse. Prevention and education is the focus of the program.

The program will target 10 and 11-year-olds in the county's public schools - children who are unlikely to be involved in drug abuse, but who are approaching the age where they may be at risk. The WVU project will take advantage of an established youth organization - the Health Sciences and Technology Academy (HSTA) - and recruit its high school age students to serve as peer mentors to the younger children.

"Drug abuse must be attacked at the root," McGraw stated. "If allowed to continue unabated, prescription drug abuse and other substance abuse problems become generational, learned behavior that puts communities and its citizens in a cycle that is hard to escape. Stopping this cycle before it starts is the mission of this program. This is in keeping with the spirit of the settlement we entered into with Purdue Pharma, Inc. and that its why this program is receiving our support. We hope the results of this program will serve generations of West Virginians."

"We will involve students, teachers, parents and community members in this effort," said Robert Pack, Ph.D., MPH, associate professor in the WVU Department of Community Medicine, who will lead the project. "Our plan is to develop, pilot test and evaluate a prescription drug abuse and diversion prevention program in this area - which has been hard-hit by abuse of prescription pain medication - in the hopes that if it is successful here it can be duplicated elsewhere."

Purdue Pharma agreed to pay West Virginia \$10 million over four years and the awards came from the second installment of \$2.5 million.

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